

DRAFT

ACVFA Quarterly Meeting September 8, 1999

Welcome and Opening Remarks: William Reese, ACVFA Chair

Mr. William Reese, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming ACVFA members, USAID staff, PVO/NGO partners, and others to the public meeting. He then introduced Ambassador J. Brady Anderson, the new Administrator of USAID. Mr. Reese said that the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA) had enjoyed a close working relationship with Ambassador Anderson's predecessor, J. Brian Atwood, and with senior USAID staff, and had full confidence that the fruitful relationship would continue. The Committee is delighted to welcome Ambassador Anderson for his first public address at this very full and interesting ACVFA quarterly meeting. The agenda is Attachment 1.

Mr. Reese spoke briefly on the new Administrator's career, emphasizing that Ambassador Anderson's past experience would stand him in good stead as Administrator of USAID. He served from 1994 to 1997 as Ambassador to Tanzania. Before that, he and his wife spent five years in East Africa with the Wycliffe Bible translators, contributing to Bible translation and literacy programs. When the President was Attorney General of Arkansas, Ambassador Anderson was an Assistant Attorney General. When Mr. Clinton became Governor, Ambassador Anderson served as special assistant and as liaison to the departments of health and human services.

Keynote Address: Ambassador J. Brady Anderson, USAID Administrator

Ambassador Anderson said that he was especially pleased to be delivering his first major public speech as USAID Administrator at this meeting of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. "Because of your contributions to USAID and development work over the years, no audience could be more appropriate as I set out to meet the challenge of leading this very fine Agency," Ambassador Anderson said.

The Administrator said it was clear to him that the ACVFA is working hard on many of the issues of great importance to USAID. He quoted a remark from ACVFA Vice-Chair, Carol Lancaster, who had observed in a meeting the previous week that the way to lead the talented men and women of USAID is to "touch their values." The Administrator recalled that during his years in Africa, leaders had often said that they looked to the United States for leadership because of American values. USAID, said Ambassador Anderson, not only embodies the generosity and compassion of the American people, but also makes those values basic components of American foreign policy. "To direct such an agency is both an opportunity and a privilege," he said, adding that he intended to be a friend to and work with the PVO community in furthering shared goals.

Ambassador Anderson then touched on his past experiences as helping prepare him for

his present position as USAID Administrator. He had practiced law in his hometown in Arkansas, with his wife, Betty Wray Anderson. He later joined the staffs of then Attorney General and later Governor Clinton. In the mid-1980s, Ambassador Anderson, his wife, and their two daughters joined the Wycliffe Bible Translators and moved to Tanzania, where they studied Swahili and spent five years living and working in the villages of East Africa. Ambassador Anderson said that one of his enduring memories of Africa was how hard the women work. For that reason, he said, it pleased him that so many of USAID's programs give special emphasis to improving the lives of women and girls. He thanked the ACVFA for its support on gender issues.

Ambassador Anderson said that it had been an honor to accept the U.S. ambassadorship to Tanzania. During his tenure as Chief of Mission in Dar es Salaam, he came to appreciate the remarkably talented USAID staff and the immense contribution of the PVOs carrying out USAID programs. Conversations with PVO workers in the Rwandan refugee camps in northwest Tanzania in 1994, and more recently in Kosovo, had brought home to him, he said, the creativity and commitment the PVOs bring to the table. As Ambassador, he had seen USAID programs in democracy, education, health care, economic development, and other areas in action on the ground, helping real people.

Ambassador Anderson said that as USAID Administrator, his challenge is to help the Agency carry out its mission with maximum effectiveness around the world and to convince Congress and the American people that this mission is as important as he and the PVO community know it to be. The Administrator said he had a list of priorities for his tenure at USAID, and one of them is to improve the agency's relationship with Congress. "I intend to be actively engaged on Capitol Hill, discussing with Members of Congress what we do with taxpayers' dollars and why it is so important to our country," he said. Ambassador Anderson said that he believes that USAID serves the national interests by addressing the root causes of conflict and that he will defend the Agency's work in those terms. The Administrator emphasized that the Agency has an important story to tell. USAID and the PVO community are helping millions of people and advancing the national interest at the same time. USAID and PVOs must communicate this better in order to convey to the American people the importance of this form of engagement overseas.

Another of his priorities, Ambassador Anderson said, is USAID's evolving role with the Department of State. He expressed great respect for the department and particularly for Secretary Albright. Ambassador Anderson said he believes the decision to have the USAID Administrator report to the Secretary of State is a good one. However, the President's decision that USAID should remain an independent agency is critical to maintaining the U.S. Government's focus on the medium- and long-term challenges confronting us. USAID and the State Department have collaborated for many years, he pointed out. "I believe we can continue to improve our partnership and I welcome your advice on this evolving relationship," the Administrator said.

Turning to the day's proceedings, Ambassador Anderson said that the subjects of two of the panels, the effort to revise USAID's Strategic Plan and the assessment of the Results

Review and Resource Request (R4) process are very important. He invited contributions from the PVO community in these and the other areas to be addressed during the day. He then said he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to lay out what he believes to be the major challenges facing us as we enter the new millennium.

November 9, 1999 will mark the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. No one had expected, said Ambassador Anderson, that the end of one era in world history would unleash forces that had been frozen in time for nearly 45 years. These events, which precipitated the collapse of states including the partial dismemberment of the former Yugoslavia, led to ethnic and nationalistic turmoil in many regions of the world.

The Administrator said that there would be no better time than the present to reassess our view of the challenges facing the global community. Such issues as global warming, environmental degradation, disease, illiteracy, hunger, and high population growth rates, he said, are manifestations of deeper structural problems within many societies. Ambassador Anderson pointed out that it is important to understand how people perceive themselves, both as individuals and in relation to others in their own societies. Is there a common set of values that could instill a greater sense of national identity in individuals and groups?

Crises often stem from the reality that some communities are advantaged at the expense of others. Conflict in many countries stems from an underdeveloped nationhood where the seeds of democracy and economic reform will not fall on fertile ground. A national identity and sense of national community reflect a sense of national purpose. "A willingness to recognize these realities for what they are, and not what we would like them to be, is our major challenge as we approach the year 2000," he said. "These are difficult issues that require us to reassess some of the basic assumptions of ten years ago, when we celebrated the triumph of democracy over totalitarianism."

The history of human progress has been one of learning as much from our failures as from our successes, the Administrator said. A lot has been learned in the field of development assistance. Ambassador Anderson said he does not agree with those who feel that responding to countries in crisis detracts from the continuing role of USAID as a development agency. On the contrary, to be successful, long-term development strategies must address the root causes of potential conflict. Ambassador Anderson said that USAID has made progress in incorporating conflict prevention and mitigation in its development strategies.

Ambassador Anderson closed by observing that as we begin the new millennium, we are confronted with immense forces of change in the world. There is much we don't understand and we may feel that the problems are too complicated and too difficult for us to make a difference. "But I firmly believe that if we open our minds to the opportunities and promise of a world of change," the Administrator said, "we can make a difference and enter the next millennium with a renewed sense of purpose."

Administrator Anderson then invited questions. (The full text of Ambassador Anderson's

remarks is Attachment 2.)

Discussion

ACVFA member **David Brown** asked Ambassador Anderson to comment on how his grassroots experience in Africa is likely to shape his the view of the job as USAID Administrator and his relationships with PVOs and Congress.

Administrator Anderson acknowledged that he considered himself very much a field person whose ideas had been incubated in African villages. Americans must realize that change comes from within; we cannot change a community any more than the community itself wants to change. The role of the PVOs should reflect this, which means that the PVO community has to continue to devote attention to local needs and desires and must plan programs consistent with people's values to ensure that their efforts are not wasted.

ACVFA member **Herschelle Challenor** commented that the United States had committed extensive resources to Kosovo. She asked the Administrator whether, under his administration, he foresaw more equity in extending post-conflict assistance to Africa.

Administrator Anderson acknowledged the importance of the issue and the need to spread resources. He suggested the possibility of donor fatigue and pointed out that to combat that requires communicating realities and publicizing success stories in Africa. He said that the visit of the President and First Lady to Africa was valuable since it drew press coverage. There is always going to be a struggle for money when more front-page attention goes to Eastern Europe.

ACVFA member **Elise Smith** complimented the Administrator on his commitment to gender issues. She pointed out that the ACVFA has a working group on gender and invited Ambassador Anderson to comment on how USAID's Gender Action Plan is helping to institutionalize gender into programs.

Administrator Anderson said that his experience in Africa had emphasized to him that the role of women is central to any development effort. The education of young girls is critical and the return over time on an investment in education is extensive in the resulting contribution to economic development. Our efforts to improve women's lives, from population programs to microlending and other economic opportunity activities, contribute to economic growth and improve society. USAID and PVOs must look at the role of women in all programs.

ACVFA member **Charles MacCormack** asked how the civil society and NGO communities can help reinvigorate the relationship with Congress.

Administrator Anderson said that PVO and USAID activities in developing countries serve the national interest. A significant number of people, however, don't understand or agree with that fact. The key, he suggested, is to engage in face-to-face education not

about foreign aid at the theoretical level but anecdotally, about specific places. We should go into communities and talk about what is being done and show how it serves the national interest, he said. For example, the development of an open society in Indonesia and the resulting stability was very beneficial to American corporations. Unfortunately, corporations on the whole don't seem to see that foreign assistance programs are related to their interests. It may be that at some level, said the Administrator, the American people do respond to the value argument. Foreign policy is guided by American values. Democracy, gender, education, and so on, are things we believe in, he said, and so it makes sense to show results in the light of our values. If we don't do that, Mr. Anderson said, he feared budget constraints and the mood in the country would prevail and the foreign assistance resources we need to do our work would not be forthcoming.

USAID's Strategic Plan: Discussion of USAID's Goal Reviews, Proposed Revisions to the Plan, and Opportunities for Partner Input

Mike Crosswell, Acting Director, Office of Policy Development and Coordination, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID

Dirk Dijkerman, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID

Ted Weihe, Chair, ACVFA Strategic Planning Working Group

Mr. Weihe opened by saying that his goal was to frame the discussion and then talk about the partners' roles in the revision of USAID's Strategic Plan. It would be unrealistic to expect major revisions in the final months of this Administration. Revisions would be more likely to be in the spirit of fine-tuning and consolidating our successes. The Strategic Plan is a requirement under Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Congress and the public have the right to know how an agency spends money and what the results are. USAID has improved greatly and is now more results-oriented and focused. ACVFA's goal is to help create a better working relationship between USAID and its partners. The specific task at hand is to ensure that the Strategic Plan guides a balanced process of managing for results.

Mr. Weihe said that the work on the revisions to the Plan fall under three broad areas:

1. USAID is not the major decision-maker on many of its actions. USAID and its partners both need to understand this and set the climate for decision-making by communicating what USAID does best—something that is especially important in light of the relationship with the State Department, since it is necessary for the USAID Strategic Plan to be in harmony with State's Plan. A section describing the context within which USAID operates will be added to the Plan.
2. The issue of stovepiping must be addressed. At present, if programs don't quite fit with stated goals, money and resources are not forthcoming. Crosscutting issues such as gender, civil society, capacity strengthening, and others must be integrated across goals. Over the next few weeks, USAID will disseminate options papers on ways to address crosscutting issues in the Plan.

3. There is a tendency to state ambitious goals, which depend upon the work and resources of many donors beyond USAID. It is necessary to focus on the end product and relate USAID's contribution to the results achieved in the field.

Mr. Crosswell said that he was standing in for Deputy Assistant Administrator Ann VanDusen, who had chaired the goal reviews and who had drafted notes summarizing “highlights” of the reviews, but who had a conflicting commitment for this presentation. He put the goal reviews in context for the audience by saying that each year operating bureaus carry out a stocktaking exercise by goal area around the Results Review and Resource Request (R4) process. The agency-wide goal reviews are based on these stocktaking exercises. Mr. Crosswell enumerated the seven main findings.

1. There is a general level of satisfaction among the bureaus that the strategic framework is practical and facilitates the planning and execution of programs.
2. There is an imbalance between interventions directed at broad institutional change and those that have more direct impact on people. There is a sense that USAID is too invested in service delivery at the expense of institutional change. Tension arises when there is resource scarcity, or when earmarks and directives control funding.
3. The fact that resources are scarce creates an inequitable distribution in relation to need. For example, some countries have serious gaps in basic education, but there are not enough basic education funds to cover the needs in all countries. There are, therefore, anomalies with regard to the geographic dispersion of programs.
4. Focus and concentration pose problems. If resources are spread too thin, how do you adjust to scarcity? Do you cut goal areas, agency objectives, countries? The problem is that cutting whole categories of activities (e.g., an agency objective) means cutting tools; cutting countries works against the principle of universality. Resources are so small in many areas that it is hard to make a discernible impact.
5. Tension exists within USAID between centralization and decentralization and it complicates resource allocation and results reporting. Decentralization is a country-based, bottom-up approach, whereas centralization is a top-down approach that identifies global issues and focuses resources in the center. It is impossible to be exclusively one or other but USAID may need to identify a primary paradigm.
6. Humanitarian assistance programs need to be better integrated with other development activities.
7. More attention needs to be directed at cross-cutting themes, and to synergies among goal areas. Reporting on one goal doesn't bring out results in cross-cutting areas. We know that democracy and governance reforms are important to economic growth, but there is no way in the current framework to capture these contributions. The virtue of the strategic framework is that it gives a compact picture of what the Agency is about. But it *does* leave out important information.

Mr. Crosswell said that the next step would be to finalize the goal reviews and issue a report that would also be available outside the Agency. The results of the goal reviews would be used in the review and update of the Strategic Plan and in the annual performance plans and reports.

Mr. Dijkerman said that he would address three issues on which USAID and ACVFA are seeking input.

1. Crosscutting themes—institutional capacity building, civil society, and gender—continue to add complexity. Capacity building affects every goal area and permeates all USAID activities; however, there is a sense of imbalance between that and the service delivery areas. There is a concern that USAID may not be doing as much as it used to in capacity building or is not giving it a high enough priority. Civil society also has been referenced throughout USAID documents for some time, and it is used as a means in all programs, but the ACVFA has expressed concern that it is not adequately addressed. More progress has been made on gender. The Office of Women in Development has been expanded. USAID is in the process of modifying the procurement process and the guidance on country programming to better accommodate gender. We are seeking a better way to report on these themes without introducing new levels of reporting requirements.
2. The Strategic Plan is inadequate when it comes to reporting how USAID operates; the Agency is trying to rectify that, especially regarding the relationship with the State Department. In many respects, USAID is an instrument; it does not set its own priorities. So it is important to clarify the impact of multiple priorities especially in terms of budget and the national interest. The Agency does not want to lose the value of locally attuned programs.
3. Performance goals are often unrealistic. While those goals are worthy, it is necessary to articulate USAID's actual value-added. Agency resources are not invested as broadly as the strategic framework would suggest. So the focus is shifting to report on areas in which USAID is implementing significant programs. The Agency is also attempting to streamline reporting requirements to better reflect what USAID is funding on the ground and to help articulate value-added in a timely fashion.

Mr. Weihe closed the panel by pointing out that the panelists had given the internal perspective, not the PVO role. A draft of the Agency Strategic Plan is to be prepared, organized by goal areas, and the ACVFA is playing a consultative role. This document must be helpful to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, USAID management, and the partners. The ACVFA plans further in-depth discussions in future meetings and would welcome partner feedback. The paper will go up, with a feedback mechanism, on the USAID website. Mr. Weihe asked the members of the PVO community to publicize the strategic plan consultations on their own websites and to set up face-to-face feedback sessions with USAID staff.

Discussion

ACVFA member **Herschelle Challenor** asked Mr. Crosswell whether he saw major differences across regions with respect to the seven issues he had presented.

Mr. Crosswell said that it was difficult to make a comparative assessment because the areas are so different, especially with respect to resources; however, there was a sense that the findings were common to all regions.

ACVFA member **Lester Salamon** asked where the Agency stands on civil society.

Mr. Dijkerman said that the issue needs further discussion. USAID is trying to determine the extent to which there is a problem and to identify areas in which the Agency is not responding adequately. The Agency wants to explore the value and wider applicability of the NGO sustainability index as well as other measurement tools. The approach the Agency intends to use will be discussed in the draft Annual Performance Plan for FY 2000, which will be available on the Agency's website in mid-October.

ACVFA member **Lou Mitchell** asked whether the Agency anticipates that decisions will be made on the issues uncovered in the goal reviews by September/October 2000 when the revised Strategic Plan is submitted. **Mr. Dijkerman** replied that the Agency hopes, through white papers and by having a draft annual performance plan available on the Internet in October, to be closer to concrete decisions. That process is under way and the Agency will have a draft revision of the Strategic Plan on the USAID website by end of year and will have a final document as required by September 2000. The interim period will be used for public comment on the draft.

A **partner**, speaking from the floor, commented that the R4 process created bureaucratic impediments by reinforcing stovepiping and the issue of institution building versus service delivery. Service delivery is easy to measure and score, whereas institution building is long term and difficult to measure and so is "discriminated against" in the current process. **Mr. Crosswell** said that stovepiping is recognized as an issue.

Mr. Dijkerman added that there is a lot of discussion of institution building. He said he has not observed that USAID staff consciously decide to concentrate on service delivery rather than institution building because service delivery is easier to report. Rather, they are being pulled away from institution building by other things, such as resource allocations. Mr. Dijkerman reiterated that USAID doesn't favor the things that are easier to measure.

Another **member of the audience**, commenting on the issue of lofty goals, said that it would take courage and honesty to say what can really be achieved, but that not doing so sets everyone up for failure. **Mr. Dijkerman** said that the Agency welcomed feedback on whether the lower level results that will be discussed in the draft annual performance plan are more realistic as to what the Agency and partners are actually doing.

A **participant** asked Mr. Dijkerman to address the problem of the annual reporting of many indicators. In most areas annual change is difficult to see—a five- to ten-year timeframe is more realistic. **Mr. Dijkerman** said the Agency will not seek to collect data on an annual basis if it is not meaningful to do so but will try to use “proxy” indicators from data that managers collect for their own monitoring and evaluation. The Agency will also be more explicit in stating that reporting does not cover everything and will indicate when specific results will be reported.

Another **participant** said it would be useful for field-based PVO staff to be an integral part of these discussions, since not everyone is able to access the Internet. She suggested that perhaps regional meetings could be held to involve field-based staff. **Mr. Dijkerman** responded that the Agency was trying to engage field staff of partners through the R4 process in each Mission; he said that more involvement might be needed, and that he would look into it further. **Mr. Weihe** suggested the use of a questionnaire or survey.

ACVFA member **Herschelle Challenor** asked Mr. Crosswell to elaborate on the thought that economic growth is beyond USAID’s manageable interest. **Mr. Crosswell** said that for example, if economic growth is seen in terms of a performance goal of at least 1% in real per capita income, it is hard to attribute overall economic growth to the Agency. So in that sense, economic growth is beyond USAID’s manageable interests. At the same time, USAID makes important contributions to economic growth (e.g., support for policy and institutional reform) that *are* within USAID’s manageable interests.

USAID’s Streamlined Results Reporting: Impact on Partners

Olivier Carduner, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID

Tony Pryor, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID

Mr. Carduner opened, speaking from a slide presentation (Attachment 3). He said that since 1993, USAID has implemented reforms to improve the focus on development results, reduce the costs of internal processes, and improve operational flexibility and speed of response. The Agency has introduced new planning methods that have moved from project-based to results-based management. There are also new organizational structures in place, including strategic objective teams that cross organizational boundaries within USAID and between USAID and external organizations. The strategic objective teams and USAID/Washington agree on objectives and performance measures and review progress and resource needs through the R4 (Results Review and Resource Request) process. Implementation approaches are determined in the field.

The R4 is key, Mr. Carduner stressed. By reporting annually on progress in achieving results and supporting requests for incremental funding over the following two years, it is intended to allow USAID to delegate authority on choice of activities to the field and respond more quickly to situations on the ground. This programming system has been in use for approximately three years. It was reviewed and adjusted last year based on experience of USAID and partner organizations. Adjustments implemented this past year focused on reducing the cost of indicator reporting and the R4 review process. It has been

recognized that the cost to produce and review the R4 documents and related indicator data is too high given staff constraints, and that the process sometimes places an excessive burden on USAID's partners. In addition, program performance data has been subject to audit, which introduces additional management costs. Mr. Carduner said that in a dynamic foreign policy and development environment, many factors besides the R4 performance data affect annual incremental budget decisions. The Agency has revised the R4 process in order to bring the costs more in line with benefits.

He then outlined key changes to the R4 process. New R4 Guidance was issued in December 1998. The Guidance reduced reporting requirements and gave missions discretion in selecting data to report so as to eliminate indicators that are not management useful at the field level. Missions were asked to consult with implementing partners and eliminate performance measures that were too burdensome or not useful from a management perspective. The process of rank ordering Strategic Objectives (SOs) on performance within a region was eliminated. The Agency is now assessing the effect of these changes.

Mr. Pryor, also using slides to illustrate his address (Attachment 3), said that at the time the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) was passed, there had been tension between long-term vision and Congress' need for short-term results. The ensuing process of implementing the GPRA led to a proliferation of objectives and indicators that created burdens for both USAID and its partners. That in turn led to a scaling back reflected in last year's changes to streamline the R4 process. The Agency is about to complete an assessment of whether the Guidance was useful and whether the changes have improved reporting. The Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination reviewed the R4 documents submitted by USAID Missions and operating units and sent questionnaires to mission directors, other USAID staff, partners, and subscribers to RFNET (USAID's moderated email discussion group on reengineering and results frameworks).

With respect to field staff, USAID learned that missions generally followed the Guidance. Fewer pages and fewer indicators were submitted. Use of the R4 in the field varies—some missions use it as part of internal management and others do not. Weaknesses in R4 content tend to be mission- rather than sector-specific. Problems tended to be across the board in a mission.

From the Washington perspective, time spent in reviews was reduced. Mission performance self-assessments were felt to be balanced and to track what USAID would expect to see developmentally. Indicators don't seem to be used as "whitewash;" reporting on indicators did not seem to be inflated.

What is still to be done, Mr. Pryor said, is to track down "outliers"; to complete the process of collecting questionnaires and information from field missions and partners; to complete partner and other focus groups; and to prepare a report that will be used to draft the next R4 Guidance.

Not all partners will notice a change, Mr. Pryor said, and changes may not affect grant and contract design in the very immediate future. However, USAID staff are concerned with ensuring that information is management-useful and cost-effective and this will make a difference over time. There are things that USAID does not yet know: how many missions have discussed the R4 process with their partners; the degree to which missions are working with partners to reduce the burden of data collection and reporting; and whether there are significant sectoral or regional differences in meeting Guidance standards.

Mr. Pryor closed by asking partners to give USAID their own experience by responding to questionnaires no later than September 17, 1999 so that changes can be made to the Guidance that will be issued in December.

Discussion

ACVFA member **Peggy Curlin** asked when R4s are due. **Mr. Carduner** responded that all R4s are required annually for every program. What will vary now is the intensity of the review that each program receives in Washington. At minimum, an R4 receives a desk review by several units in Washington who use the information to prepare budgets and summarize performance information at a higher level. At least once every three years, Missions will be asked to send staff to participate in a more detailed formal program review in Washington. In addition, informal reviews and exchanges between field and Washington staff are encouraged to supplement the annual R4 document. Missions scheduled for an intensive review are notified ahead of time.

ACVFA member **Ted Weihe** asked the average number of indicators reported against. **Mr. Carduner** said that missions were instructed to report on three-to-four indicators. The SO teams decide on what is management-useful. **Mr. Weihe** noted that the process of competing for contracts can put pressure on some partners to over report or report more indicators because of a feeling that more data will be better. This puts a burden on partners to gather data and attempt to quantify the often unquantifiable. He pointed out that there is a cost element to putting a large number of indicators in contracts. **Mr. Carduner** suggested that partners talk to the USAID staff responsible for the activity and find out what they actually need before sending in an over-detailed proposal on performance reporting, or to reflect the costs of a more detailed performance reporting effort as a separate option in a bid proposal.

ACVFA member **Peggy Curlin** asked whether it was expected that cutting paperwork would free up more staff time in the field. In past years, she said, there has been a reduction in USAID mission staff visits to field projects. **Mr. Carduner** acknowledged that the issue has been a constant struggle but that he hoped that the improvements to the process would lighten reporting burdens and enable USAID staff to spend more time in the field to focus on improving quality and impact of programs.

ACVFA member **Jim Henson** asked whether involving partners in Strategic Objective teams is common to all missions. **Mr. Carduner** said it appeared to be uneven. Most Missions have created SO Teams, and most have made greater efforts to work in a more

collaborative mode with partners, but not all have incorporated partners as expanded team members. New guidance has been recently issued showing staff how to incorporate partners in decision making while avoiding conflict of interest issues, and new training programs are under way to help people work more effectively in teams.

A **participant** asked for the presenters' feelings about trend-line information, given the suggestion that the Missions drop some indicators. Doesn't that create a problem for gathering data on trends and would USAID/W continue to track those indicators?

Mr. Pryor replied that baselines and benchmarks are changing rapidly because of world events and so indicators invariably will change. USAID is not suggesting that indicators and trend lines be dropped, however. What is most important is to get the development hypothesis right and the indicators will follow.

The USAID Department of State Relationship: A Status Report on the State-AID Working Group and an Update on the 90-day Humanitarian Assistance Review

Thomas H. Fox, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID

Anne C. Richard, Director, Resources, Plans and Policy, Department of State

Ambassador James H. Michel, USAID Counselor

Morton H. Halperin, Director, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State

Mr. Reese introduced the session by saying that the way in which USAID and the State Department work together, in general and in specifics, is an important topic. He said that there are some new ideas on the table. "What is our value-added? What can we add that's constructive to the discussion?" he asked the audience.

Mr. Fox opened the panel by giving a brief background. The origin of the two reviews now ongoing was a protracted, and often bitter, discussion some four years ago that led to the compromise solution now being implemented. Rather than being merged into the State Department, USAID remains an independent agency whose Administrator reports directly to the Secretary of State. USAID and State are encouraged to coordinate development assistance programs with foreign policy. The culmination was a jointly crafted memorandum from the Secretary of State to the USAID Administrator confirming the agreements that had been reached and calling for a 90-day review of the coordination process. The memorandum also called for the two agencies to work together on administrative issues and to review operational interaction with respect to humanitarian assistance.

Regarding the overall coordination, the two agencies were asked us to look at:

- how to better handle off-cycle needs for coordination—for example ad hoc response to unplanned emergencies requiring foreign aid;
- how to ensure that development assistance and foreign policy are coordinated;

- how to cooperate better in the programming of development assistance funds managed by USAID and economic support funds, where State is the final arbiter though the funds are actually managed by USAID.

As a result, a working group composed of senior level staff from both agencies was formed. There was a full group meeting in August 1999 at which individual working groups were formed. The full group will meet again in October. The general feeling, Mr. Fox said, was that good progress is being made.

Mr. Fox summarized USAID's goals for the working group in five points:

1. USAID is committed to a stronger, closer relationship with the State Department.
2. The Agency wishes to ensure that areas of potential disagreement are addressed early at the appropriate junctures—during annual budget setting and strategic planning. USAID wants to ensure that its and State's plans are in accord.
3. USAID wishes to clarify the interaction of, and respect the differences between, economic support and development assistance funds and the appropriate occasions to use each kind of funding.
4. USAID needs to instill a deeper understanding among State Department officials about the inherent inflexibility in USAID's budget. The complex decision-making process required to respond to a range of directives and earmarks is often poorly understood by State.
5. USAID wishes to see better understanding by State of the importance of long-term development assistance as an important foreign policy priority and as a means of accomplishing long-term, vital national interests; on USAID's side, there needs to be more tolerance of the need to meet short-term foreign policy interests as well.

Mr. Fox said, in closing, that he viewed the review process as an opportunity for USAID and the State Department to communicate to the Hill and OMB the ways in which the two agencies work in concert toward common goals and priorities. He said the working group is committed to ensuring that the review addresses and minimizes irritants in the State-AID relationship. "We are off to a splendid start," he said. "Now it's constructive to talk about the further role you, our partners, might play."

Ms. Richard said that overall she agreed with Mr. Fox's description of the process and his positive assessment of how it was proceeding. Then she laid out what State hoped to gain from the process. Secretary Albright is interested in a better relationship because both agencies have so much important work to do. Development assistance is one tool in a toolbox used to promote U.S. national interests abroad; it plays a critical role in achieving U.S. foreign policy goals. The Secretary is placing a major focus on resources this fall, will be reviewing USAID's budget, and is aware of the degree to which our aid and operating budgets are depleted. She does not intend, however, to micromanage USAID.

From the standpoint of regional Assistant Secretaries, some believe they have limited ability to influence the allocation of assistance resources. The effectiveness of their working relationships with USAID counterparts tend to vary from region to region. At the staff level, the Department needs a better understanding of USAID processes and impediments. Relations between the two agencies are said to be fairly good in the field, and these good relationships need to be replicated in Washington. The task force is examining areas where things work well to develop “best practices” that could be applied to other areas.

On a personal level, Ms. Richard said that she is very interested in the work of the task force in promoting good government. “Irritants,” as Tom Fox has called the list of problems the task force is trying to solve, can be surmounted. “We have too much work to do,” she said, “to let bureaucratic shenanigans cripple us.” She acknowledged that she was originally skeptical about the 90-day review. However as the sub-groups began to write about the process, she realized that the review is already making a valuable contribution in mutual education and understanding.

Mr. Halperin explained that there is a second study that focuses on humanitarian relief. Secretary Albright asked for a review of humanitarian assistance based on the perception that there is a need for an advocate for humanitarian response at the senior level of the U.S. government. Currently responsibilities are spread across cabinets and agencies in times of crisis without any designated agency leadership, structure, or coordination. Planning consequently suffers and ad hoc arrangements are put into place weeks after a crisis happens. The diffused response stems from the fact that there is no single voice that can speak for the entire range of the humanitarian response community. The problem is seen in Washington, not in the field. Increasingly, the United States is called upon to respond to complex crises that are manmade and, therefore, have a major foreign policy component, often requiring the military. The fragmentary authority and dispersed response also give rise to bureaucratic conflict. One of the focuses of the study is to find options to address the problem of advocacy. Another focus is to analyze the humanitarian response apparatus in connection with the dominant forces in the two agencies—that is, sustainable development at USAID and foreign policy at State. A question that might be asked is: “Is humanitarian response a stepchild in both agencies?” he queried.

Mr. Halperin said that the primary goal of the humanitarian review is to find a way to better serve the President and Secretary of State by improving authority, coherence, accountability and leadership of U.S. humanitarian response programs. It is important to create a single, unified voice with a high-level seat at the table when humanitarian response is being considered. There are two possible paths: to consolidate State’s and USAID’s current programs into a single entity under high level leadership; or to create consistent coordination mechanisms for future crises. He said that the Secretary of State has not expressed a view or preference and that the goal of the task force is to develop credible options, not respond to specific parts of each bureaucracy. The working group is chaired jointly by USAID and State and includes the National Security Council. The review has attempted to reach out to other groups, such as ACVFA at present, and other

groups over the past few weeks. There will be another consultation at InterAction later this month.

Ambassador Michel observed that the existing management structures had evolved in the context of natural disasters, usually on a short-term basis. In that context, regional bureaus took over if projects became longer term. Those were not the complex emergencies that occur now, he said, where there are issues of conflict prevention and resolution. Response is more complicated today with the integration of military, diplomatic, and economic forces. Disaster assistance consumes increasing portions of development resources. The countries furthest from achieving their development goals are those most involved in conflict and prolonged emergencies.

Much research has been conducted, said Ambassador Michel, with case studies carried out on Afghanistan, Sudan, Hurricane Mitch, and Kosovo. He enumerated the emergent issues as:

- the coordination of operational processes, which seem to be remarkably efficient;
- the lack of a voice to inform senior policy deliberations;
- the issue of donor coordination;
- the integration of humanitarian aid with coherent support for development—long-term measures that address the root causes of conflict.

The question is how to bring all the pieces together. Ambassador Michel said he hoped that the decision would not be to manage humanitarian assistance and development separately but to see humanitarian assistance as part of an overall response to development issues and one of many tools in foreign policy. He said he had confidence that the review would help identify ways in which the mechanisms could be improved.

Discussion

ACVFA member **Ted Weihe** asked whether there are models from other countries for coordinating development and humanitarian aid. **Ambassador Michel** replied that there is quite a variety of experiences to draw on, but no examples in which the agency responsible for disaster response is separate from development.

ACVFA member **Charles MacCormack** said it appeared to him that the global social agenda in foreign policy is not far advanced. Is USAID in fact more involved than State in social issues, he asked. If so, how does that affect the picture? **Mr. Fox** said that perceptions such as this are the reason for USAID and State to communicate common causes to Congress, the Administration, and the public. The more both agencies are seen as interrelated, the more likely that long-term social development will be viewed as an important component of foreign policy. **Mr. Halperin** noted that the State Department would not agree that it is less involved with the social agenda than USAID. But in fact, the bulk of funds for social issues is spent by the international lending institutions that are not controlled by either State or USAID. Better coordination with these institutions needs to be built into the reviews. **Ambassador Michel** questioned why there is a perception that USAID is only concerned with social aspects of development. USAID programs also

contribute to economic development and to reducing countries' dependency on aid. Such programs could be integrated more closely with the multilateral institutions and trade organizations. **Ms. Richard** added that the task force is looking at division of labor, for example on environmental issues, between USAID and the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs in the State Department. Not all areas of overlap are well understood. The task force is working to capture where the division of labor is good and where it is not.

ACVFA member **Lou Mitchell** asked how the State Department and USAID would make decisions about specific countries, especially with reference to the two kinds of funding (Development Assistance and Economic Support Funds). **Mr. Fox** replied that there are three basic criteria for use of Development Assistance funds: need; the capacity of a country to absorb the resources through its institutions and policies; and foreign policy importance. Once a proposal has been made for Development Assistance, the agencies would determine whether overriding political reasons exist to change the amount, perhaps by increasing it or adding Economic Support Funds. The system is not perfected yet, he said, but these types of decisions are under discussion. **Ms. Richard** said that there are many routine procedures in USAID and State, and the two agencies are trying to mesh them together where there are logical interconnections. This would go a long way toward improving communication and relations.

ACVFA member **Lester Salamon** observed that the coordination issue in the humanitarian assistance field extends beyond USAID, State and government agencies to that between the government and the PVO community. He asked whether any thought was being given to improving these relationships and to improving the balance between disaster preparedness and response. **Ambassador Michel** replied by asking that partners offer ideas for improvement of the relationship between the U.S. government and PVOs. **Mr. Halperin** added that there are also the questions of relations between the military and the civilian side and coordination with other governments and international agencies. On the question of preparedness, he said that part of the answer would be the high-level advocate who would get involved early on and point out consequences of various actions.

ACVFA member **Jim Moody** commented that the basic thesis of the task force seems to be that the current arrangement needs to be fixed, and he questioned whether this was really necessary, since humanitarian response works well in the field. He also asked whether State's Global Bureau ought to be in the discussions. He pointed out that any change in the current situation would have funding implications on the Hill. If you detach humanitarian assistance from USAID, development funding could also suffer, he noted. **Mr. Halperin** replied that the other view is that Congress knows what the two numbers are and can tell the difference between disaster relief and development money. No one wants to do anything that could reduce development assistance funding.

A **questioner from the floor** observed that much time had been devoted to the four case studies but that specific country case studies preclude contributions by a broad range of PVOs. What other ways are there to engage the PVO community and make it feel part of the process of examining the issues? **Mr. Halperin** responded that the task force is open

to specific suggestions and that its general premise is that the NGO community should be involved in the discussions. **Ambassador Michel** pointed out that research efforts were not confined to those four case studies.

Another **participant** asked whether media attention drove the special reaction to the Kosovo refugee response, and if not, who was the voice, and could this voice be used to enhance the response to other crises, particularly in Africa? **Mr. Halperin** said a voice is important, but right now the dominant culture of each agency drives the response and no such single voice exists. It may not be necessary to establish a new institution to create that voice, but the agencies should direct the response before media hype determines the priorities. A new institution may be needed to effect a unified voice.

ACVFA member **Peggy Curlin** referenced the special needs of women in the areas of relief and refugee issues. She pointed out that there are bureaus in USAID and the State Department as well as an interagency task force on women and recommended that these resources be involved as early as possible in emergency response planning. **Ambassador Michel** said that the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has looked at women's issues and its experience would be useful for the U.S. government.

Legislative Update

Suzanne Palmieri, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, USAID

Ms. Palmieri said both houses had passed the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill and the next step would be to go to conference. At this point it is unclear how the conference negotiations will play out. Over the next few weeks, both chambers will focus on sending the tax package forward to the President and planning for responding to its veto. Only one of thirteen appropriations bills has been signed. USAID's funding level is \$2 billion short, and the domestic agencies face similar shortfalls.

The budget situation is complicated by additional requests coming either as a budget amendment or as supplemental funding—for Kosovo, Colombia, embassy security, the Wye Agreement, debt relief, Turkish earthquake relief, etc. It is expected that supplemental requests will total \$6 billion for USAID alone (last year \$14 billion was added back in for federal agencies overall). There is some agreement among congressional staff that waiting too long on requests for supplemental emergency assistance isn't in their best interests. Several prominent senators are actively supportive of the fact that USAID needs additional resources, and are working to remove the 1997 spending caps. However, others, equally powerful, are against it. **Ms. Palmieri** said there is no clear path to a signed bill at this point. It is likely that USAID will operate under a continuing resolution.

Discussion

ACVFA member **Jim Moody** questioned how the extra \$6 billion would be financed, and whether there are firm dates for the conference on the bills. **Ms. Palmieri** replied that the question on how to finance the emergency assistance has not been resolved, and there are no firm conference dates.

ACVFA member **Ted Weihe** asked whether Kosovo funding would come from the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act monies, or from the International Disaster Assistance account. **Ms. Palmieri** replied that some of the money for longer-term activities would come from SEED funds.

ACVFA member **Peggy Curlin** asked whether the "Mexico City" provision regarding funding for family planning activities could result in a stalemate that could close down the government. **Ms. Palmieri** replied that this provision would likely be removed from the foreign operations bill in order to avoid a government shutdown from a failure to appropriate agencies' budgets.

Transition From Disasters: Update on Balkan Reconstruction and Hurricanes Mitch and Georges Rehabilitation Efforts

Mark L. Schneider, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID

Donald L. Pressley, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States, USAID

Mr. Schneider applauded the members of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid for helping USAID and other U.S. government agencies respond to the most destructive hurricane in this hemisphere's history. One week of rainstorms produced by Hurricane Mitch exceeded the region's average rainfall for an entire year. This deluge caused catastrophic floods and landslides that left over nine thousand dead, displaced more than three million people, and destroyed between \$7.5 to 8.5 billion dollars worth of infrastructure that took decades to build. The United States' response has been the most comprehensive and far reaching with over \$30 million in private donations, \$300 million for emergency relief, and an additional \$600 to 700 million for reconstruction over the next two years. USAID is administering \$500 million of this assistance and has already obligated more than 80 percent of this amount.

Mr. Schneider noted that the commitment to provide assistance at these levels enabled the United States to lead by example. During the Stockholm Donors Meeting on Hurricane Reconstruction, the United States successfully obtained commitments from other donors to provide a significant amount of financial assistance. The Stockholm conference emphasized that reconstruction goals should not merely focus on rebuilding what was destroyed but should also count on NGOs to help establish response mechanisms needed to mitigate the catastrophic affects of future natural disasters.

Mr. Schneider stressed the importance of involving civil society, the private sector, and its foreign government counterparts to devise reconstruction strategies that ensure resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner. USAID used PVOs and NGOs in the initial relief stages and plans to continue to use them over the next several years to ensure the participation of civil society. In addition to expanding existing USAID grants and cooperative agreements, the Agency issued several new Requests for Applications (RFAs), which can be obtained through USAID's website.

Mr. Pressley said that in the Balkans, USAID looks to the Europeans to take the lead on reconstruction while USAID takes the lead on recovery. During a recent visit, he said, he saw challenges but also heartening evidence in Bosnia and Herzegovina of real progress in recovery and reconstruction on a national and personal level. The people want a chance for peace, prosperity, and a better life for their children, which is helping move the effort to build a multi- ethnic nation. In Kosovo, on the other hand, people are still focused on hate and revenge. The challenge is to help them refocus on rebuilding their lives. USAID needs to translate good intentions into actions on the ground.

The priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are to:

- create self sustaining employment by restoring the private sector and creating 500 jobs per month;
- create a policy framework conducive to a market economy;
- facilitate minority refugee return and reparation;
- strengthen the democratic institutions (a free press, citizen advocacy, an independent judiciary, etc.).

In terms of results, USAID onsite training has improved the media; electricity has been restored to 25% of the population; and 80,000 refugees have returned. Less progress has been made toward a market-based economy. Country leaders are blocking privatization and corruption hinders development. Mr. Pressley said that resistance to reform was expected. The Kosovo conflict will also damage Bosnia to a degree but in the main, Bosnia remained stable and at peace while its neighbor fought a war and this, said Mr. Pressley, is no small accomplishment. PVOs and NGOs deserve a lot of the credit. USAID worked with many organizations, among them CARE, Save the Children, World Vision International, and the International Rescue Committee.

Turning to Kosovo, Mr. Pressley said that if democracy is to be built, citizens must build it from the ground up. Kosovo's fate will depend on people who have been prevented from participating in democracy. However, until basic human needs have been met the groundwork for stability cannot be laid. The four steps are humanitarian assistance for returning refugees; reconstruction of the infrastructure; establishment of an interim civil administration; and institution building for the longer term.

The United States pledged assistance totaling \$500 million in cash and commodities. USAID will rely heavily on its partners to help people return to their homes and provide health services, counseling, etc. Existing NGO networks will be used with the goal of instilling a spirit of collaboration among the Kosovars. Mr. Pressley said that assessment teams are currently working in Kosovo. The scale of the recovery effort is not yet known, but every sector will have an important role to play.

"How can you help?" he asked the partners. The answer, he said, is to help USAID make the term "sustainable partnerships" a reality. Partnerships are needed between nations, institutions, peoples, and governments. A variety of mechanisms must be in place to continue USAID's work when bilateral assistance is no longer necessary. "Our focus is shifting," he said, "from a donor agency to a partner sharing lessons."

Discussion

ACVFA Chair **Bill Reese** recalled Administrator Anderson's rhetorical question as to whether these natural and manmade disasters detract from USAID's long-term goal and invited comment. **Mr. Schneider** said that in regions prone to a high incidence of natural disasters, long-term development strategies must include disaster prevention and mitigation mechanisms that have not been given adequate attention. Mr. Schneider also

stressed the importance of giving environmental issues higher priority because environmental degradation increases vulnerability to disasters. **Mr. Pressley** added that the Administrator had touched on the very basis for USAID's existence. It is the involvement in long-term development that distinguishes USAID from the State Department. ENI deals with countries transitioning from one form of government to a totally different form. This necessitates addressing issues in a hurry, looking at the gamut of things it takes to help countries deal themselves with the issues. What is required, Mr. Pressley said, is a holistic approach that's difficult to explain and defend, but that is essential.

ACVFA member **Ted Weihe** asked Mr. Pressley for his thoughts on Montenegro. Second, is Serbia a classic example of humanitarian concerns bumping into political concerns? And is USAID a player? **Mr. Pressley** replied that United States policy is supportive of the current leadership of Montenegro and USAID wants to help the country achieve the economic viability to carry out political activities. Assistance has focused on budgetary support as well as technical advice to this end. On Serbia, he said that the Serbian people have a tough choice. Humanitarian aid is not tied to political discussions; it is limited to the lives and welfare of individual citizens. USAID feels that there are forces for democratic change in government in Serbia and wants to support that in a broad way by giving Serbians the tools to make their choice.

ACVFA member **Jim Henson** asked for definitions of sustainable partnerships. **Mr. Pressley** cited a health partnership program in the ENI region in which an American hospital and a Latvian hospital were linked in a mutually beneficial learning relationship. USAID has closed the Latvian program but the American hospital has signed a memorandum of agreement to continue the partnership without USAID funding.

ACVFA member **Charles MacCormack** commented we need to respond to the crisis in youth employment and motivation in the Balkans, and that the Europeans have an important role to play in university exchange and youth education and training programs. **Mr. Pressley** said that USAID has thought about such programs, but is being careful not to overwhelm the educational systems of the countries. He agreed that this is indeed a problem that will require quick action. The Europeans are important players.

ACVFA member **Herschelle Challenor** asked whether the Serbian situation would extend the life of ENI. Dr. Challenor said that she was concerned, as a taxpayer, that in spite of gross corruption, funds still flow. She asked why there seems to be a double standard; this does not happen in other parts of world. **Mr. Pressley** responded that there had been miscommunication and misunderstanding. Funding in the ENI region has been audited and while there was some misallocation, it is by no means the scale implied by the press. Corruption is rampant among government officials, but that does not involve USAID funding and whenever money is given to governments, it is strictly audited. The BIH Bank (Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina) was not following funding rules and so USAID withdrew funding and is engaged in legal proceedings against the bank. Mr. Pressley added that fighting corruption is part of USAID's overall program.

Dr. Challenor asked how USAID prevented funds from being funneled to political not development ends. **Mr. Pressley** replied that building democracy in a transparent way is, in USAID's opinion, developmentally sound and programs to that end have been operating in the region for ten years. USAID expect its funds to be used for pro-democracy ends and not for anti-government campaigns.

In response to a **participant's** question on whether privatization of state enterprises efforts have been successful, **Mr. Schneider** stated that success largely depends on how the privatization is undertaken. In some countries in Latin America, privatization was conducted in a transparent manner with a clear understanding of the value of the entity being privatized, the return on private investment in terms of improving services at nominal costs, and the effects privatization may have on workers' pensions, among other social implications. Mr. Schneider offered the privatization of the natural gas industry in Bolivia as a successful model. In some countries where the process was closed and corrupt, privatization efforts were not successful amid growing rejection of the incumbent government by the public.

Assessment of USAID's Gender Plan of Action

Elise Smith, Chair, ACVFA Gender Working Group

Ambassador Sandy Vogelgesang, Assessment Team Leader

Jeff Malick, Assessment Consultant

Ms. Smith said that the ACVFA had been the catalyst in USAID's development of a Gender Plan of Action in 1996. The intent of the Working Group in carrying out this assessment is to see what has been the value-added of the plan over the past three years and to identify shortcomings and needed changes. The assessment team hopes to present a report at an ACVFA meeting in March 2000 giving the recommendations that will be presented to the Administrator.

Ms. Smith enumerated the achievements of the assessment team to date:

- successful partnerships were established with the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, the Office of Women in Development, and the Global Bureau;
- the strategic framework better reflects gender considerations;
- a successful Women in Development Fellows program was established;
- the need for technical training for the missions has been addressed, although the increased demand exceeds the ability to deliver;
- gender language has been incorporated into grants and cooperative agreements and most recently into competitive bids.

Ms. Smith said that the team is now looking at progress and additional actions to be achieved.

Ms. Smith then introduced Team Leader Sandy Vogelgesang, who has been a senior advisor to the USAID administration and was recently Ambassador to Nepal. Ms. Smith also presented another member of the assessment team, Jeff Malick, a longtime USAID

professional and a consultant who is well versed in the inner workings of USAID. Ms. Smith said that the assessment team had been gathering documentation and had conducted interviews with USAID staff on their experience with gender issues from which they developed a survey to be sent to USAID missions. Four field visits are planned to the Ukraine, Guatemala, Uganda, and Morocco.

Ambassador Vogelgesang said that the goal of this objective assessment is to inform future policy. “This is a real opportunity to be innovative,” she said. Work began in July with the full cooperation of USAID. All interviews were off the record to encourage candid conversations. Interview are to continue at the mid level in the Agency, and Ambassador Vogelgesang said that she also wished to engage with the PVO and NGO community. She appealed to the partners to send documentation of their own gender experiences, policies, and lessons learned. She said that the questionnaire would be shared. After the new fiscal year begins, an e-mail survey will be sent to all USAID missions followed by telephone interviews. Ambassador Vogelgesang said that the end product of the team’s work would be a report to be released in March 2000.

Ambassador Vogelgesang said she didn’t want to report in too much detail on her findings to date for fear of jeopardizing the objectivity of future interviews. In general, however, she noted, the team was finding that the issue is not *whether* gender is included in development programs, but *how* it is implemented. Methodology is widely divergent, with many bureaus unsure of how to be effective. The timing of the Gender Plan of Action—amidst reductions in force, USAID’s move to the Ronald Reagan Building, and resource problems—was not helpful. Interviews showed that accountability is a recurrent theme. USAID staff are unclear as to how high a priority gender is. Ambassador Vogelgesang said there is a need for clarification and mechanisms for accountability. She invited input from the partners.

Mr. Malick said that there is certainly interest at senior levels in gender but it does tend to be crowded out by the other issues vying for attention. He reiterated that the atmosphere at USAID was one of cooperation.

Discussion

ACVFA member **Ted Weihe** commented that the way in which USAID determines intervention strategy has lot to do with gender. The focus of a program may well control the balance of male and female. **Ambassador Vogelgesang** said that she saw increased effort to ensure that women have a role in field programs and to develop programs that capitalize on the added value that women bring. However, USAID must expend more effort in finding opportunities that will rebound with more benefits for both men and women.

ACVFA member **Peggy Curlin** observed that the First Lady’s visit to Asia had been very powerful in helping to articulate gender issues to the American public in a unique way. Using the strategy of congratulations to foreign governments reinforces how important

these programs are, and support from a powerful government like the United States gives local women an advocacy tool to use with their governments.

A **questioner from the floor** asked whether the team would be interviewing Canadian and European donors to look at how they have integrated gender concerns into their programs and bureaucracies. **Ambassador Vogelgesang** replied that some interviewing of other donors had already taken place and more is planned.

Elise Storck, USAID, said that there is now a body of data proving the value of gender in achieving results. Is the results framework proving more or less open to gender programming? **Ambassador Vogelgesang** responded that there is some documentation but it is by no means complete. The last R4 Guidance did not ask for gender-disaggregated data. There has been no comprehensive effort since the 1982 policy paper on women. The Gender Plan was originally to have included a gender-disaggregated database but problems with USAID's New Management System forestalled that effort.

ACVFA member **Herschelle Challenor** said that the Gender Plan appeared to focus on policy and programs. She asked whether there would be any attempt to look at the promotion of women in policy positions in the Agency and at the number of women affected by cutbacks. **Ambassador Vogelgesang** replied that the Gender Plan has focused on institutionalizing gender. Once that is accomplished, it is possible to examine personnel issues.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.